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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography describes research on the characteristics of apprehensive writers and on methodology which has been found useful in reducing anxiety and increasing writing achievement. Following an introduction, 27 annotations (dating from 1976 to 1990) are presented. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations follow. A 33-item bibliography is attached. (SR)

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AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF STUDENT ATTITUDE AND TEACHER BEHAVIORS ON WRITING APPREHENSION AND COMPOSITION QUALITY

by

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INTRODUCTION

In 1986 the National Assessment of Educational Progress reported on the state of reading and writing in the United States. The resulting report, The Writing Report Card: Writing Achievement in American Schools, stated that most U.S. schoolchildren do not have the mastery of written expression ("Students Lack Skills" 484). This same study indicated that even though the amount of instructional time spent on writing had increased over the last ten years, students' attitudes toward writing seemed to have steadily declined throughout their educational experiences (Lapointe 136-37). Research has indicated that secondary students viewed most school writing as inauthentic and, as a result, "gave false information, complained of boredom, and had to be prodded" (Edelsky and Smith 47). At a time when writing skills are in greater demand than ever before students enter writing courses with reluctance and bring with them a variety of fears that prohibit them from acquiring these valuable skills (Simard 101). It is imperative, therefore, that writing instructors begin to directly encounter the array of students' prejudices and misconceptions and focus on gaining an insight into why students are not achieving.

Many recent studies on student attitude and its effect on composition quality have focused on elevating this

awareness and assisted in breaking down the screens of prejudice to which Simard referred. Through reviewing this body of data, instruction may be enhanced, students fears and anxieties may be dispelled, and students' attitudes may be changed so that they may perceive writing as a successful and meaningful form of communication. By dividing the research into categories and displaying each, some clarity can be established and general conclusions regarding apprehension and composition quality may be reached.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Writing is a valuable and necessary skill for all students to master. Research indicates that many students fail because they perceive writing as dangerous and have low expectations for success (Buley-Meissner 7). For the writing teacher, this apprehensive attitude poses a major concern. This paper will analyze studies involving reluctant writers, as well as discuss techniques which have been found to reduce anxiety and increase writing success.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

On a daily basis writing instructors struggle to motivate reluctant writers. The purpose of this study is to analyze the characteristics of apprehensive writers and review the research on methodology which has been found useful in reducing anxiety and increasing writing achievement.

ORGANIZATION

To best systematize the approach to this topic, the studies have been organized in two ways. First, all research which dealt primarily with apprehension and attitude were reviewed. Next, those studies that researched interventions involving non-traditional instruction were scrutinized. Secondly, within those categories the studies which reviewed both apprehension and intervention were analyzed, and conclusions regarding effective instructional techniques and effective teacher behaviors were reviewed.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDIES

Some of the limitations of the study were imposed by the nature of the research. The field of investigation involving writing apprehension is relatively new and many of the studies involving the Daly-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension (MWA) have not been replicated so that findings can be compared and contrasted. In addition, many terms in composition research do not have agreed upon definitions that allow confident comparisons from one study to another.

Another limitation was the availability of source material. While many research articles were requested some were impossible to locate through inter-library loan in the time period allowed. Such studies were found in summarized form and included.

GLOSSARY

high apprehensives--individuals who experience some degree of worry regarding writing and score above 90 on the MWA (Buley-Meissner 4).

low apprehensives--individuals who feel comfortable about writing and who score less than 54 on the MWA (Buley-Meissner 4).

MWA (Daley-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension)--a survey that offers instructors a quick and accurate means of evaluating the complex relationship between how students write and how they feel about writing (Buley-Meissner 3-4).

reluctant writer--"one who experiences some degree of writing apprehension and whose work is often characterized by syntactic immaturity, inconsistent tense and mood, awkward introductions, inappropriate diction, redundancy, lack of coherence and transition, and generally poor organization and development."(Auten 921).

writing--"an isolated activity governed by conventions such as spelling, handwriting, punctuation, and grammar" (Outhred 211).

writing apprehension----refers to "an individual difference associated with an increase in anxiety when one is faced with situations requiring writing" (Daly and Miller).

writing process--the combination of thinking, planning, organizing, experimenting, changing, and polishing of ideas to produce a piece of writing (Brown, et.al. 7).

ANNOTATIONS

WHAT CHARACTERIZES A STUDENT WHO IS HIGHLY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WRITING?

Steidle, Ernest F. "An Investigation of Writing Ability as a Function of Student Attitude: General and Specific." Speech presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, April 1977. ERIC number ED139023.

This speech summarized a study involving 920 students from grades four, five, nine and twelve. It examined the effect of students' general attitudes toward school on their writing ability. A direct linear dependency was found between student attitudes and composition quality, indicating that self-concept and attitudes associated with success in school were also associated with success in writing. Steidle suggested that instilling a more positive attitude and encouraging a healthier self-image increased the desire to write and thus the quality of composition.

Powell, Bertie Jeffress. "A Comparison of Students' Attitudes and Success in Writing." Journal of Negro Education 53.2 (Spring 1984): 114-23.

This study related the correlation between students' grades and writing apprehension. It found that most A and B undergraduate students had low apprehension, while D and F undergraduates had high apprehension. The article also offered teaching suggestions which included use of peer tutoring and feedback, emphasis on positive evaluative markings from instructors, many free writing experiences (such as journals) and use of group writing experiences to gain interest and build confidence.

Book, Virginia. "Some Effects of Apprehension on Writing Performance." Speech presented at the annual meeting of the American Business Communication Association, San Diego, California, December 1976. ERIC document number ED132595.

This paper summarized the results of a study on the effects of apprehension on writing performance. She found that subjects identified as high apprehensives on the MWA (Daly-Miller measure of writing apprehension) produced three times fewer words and conveyed four-and-a-half times less information than individuals identified as low in apprehension. She also noted that high apprehensives had three times more misspelled words than low apprehensives and as a group had more non-sentences and elliptical structures than did low apprehensives. This study linked underdeveloped writing skills, avoidance of writing tasks and lack of experience with high apprehension in writing.

Beatty, Michael J. and Steven Payne. "Is Construct Differentiation Loquacity? A Motivational Perspective." Human Communication Research Journal 11.4 (Summer 1985): 605-612.

This article summarized the results of two studies involving college students. The first study involved students who were promised credit for the course based on a given number of completed assignments as well as variety of constructs. Results indicated that the experimental group wrote more words and more constructs than did their counterparts in the control group. The second study related the correlation between writing apprehension scores (as measured by the WAS) and student self-reports of situational motivation as these predicted loquacity and complexity of written expression. Findings indicated that students who willingly admitted to fearing writing situations (especially those involving evaluation) also scored high in apprehension and wrote briefer essays of simple constructs than their counterparts in the study who scored low in apprehension and indicated less situational fear.

Hollandsworth, Linda P. "How Personality and Background Affect Writing Attitudes." A survey sponsored by the Continuing Education Office at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1988. ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED296336.

The results of this survey documented the effects of a student's personality and background on writing attitudes. 17 high school students who were participating in a summer school writing class were interviewed and surveyed. Students completed a questionnaire about their home, school and community, and each student was also interviewed to verify answers on the questionnaire. To assist in determining how students felt about their writing the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Scale (WAS) was also administered and the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS) was given to determine personality traits. In addition, two writing samples from each student were analyzed to correlate findings with results from the tests. The results indicated a significant relationship existed between writers' attitudes and their personality traits, writing apprehension, and writing background. Of the students tested 8 were found to be "extraversion" and were not apprehensive toward writing. Four students were labelled "introversion" but experienced no difficulty writing as long as the assignment was teacher directed. The survey thus confirmed that student attitude and perception does affect and influence writing achievement.

DO INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES HAVE AN EFFECT ON STUDENTS' WRITING APPREHENSION?

Buley-Meissner, Mary Louise. "'Am I Really That Bad?' Writing Apprehension and Basic Writers." Journal of Basic Writing 8.2 (1989): 3-20.

This article cited a study which attempted to show a relationship between apprehension in writing and instruction geared at relieving anxiety. The subjects of the study were 12 college freshmen, basic writers who were identified as having extreme deficiencies in written expression. They were enrolled in a basic freshman composition class and upon entrance were given the Daly-Miller measure of writing apprehension (MWA). The MWA assesses students' attitudes toward writing assignments and assists the teacher by identifying strengths and weaknesses. A score above 90 on the MWA indicates "high apprehensiveness", while a score below 54 indicates "low apprehensiveness". In this study the average score of the students was 81 with a range from 54 to 112. An average score of 71 may be common for "anxious writers". By that standard, all but two of the students involved in the study were anxious writers at the start of the course. At the end of the course, after extensive composition instruction and directed practice, the MWA was given again. An analysis of the differences in the scores indicated 5 major conclusions: 1) Students liked writing as a means of self-expression and strongly linked writing to an increased personal satisfaction. 2) Apprehension occurred strongly when there was threat of evaluation, especially if the evaluator was a better writer. 3) Apprehensive students lacked the basic strategies of producing an essay. 4) Non-native students showed less confidence in their writing and more reliant on teachers for help in improving their work. 5) Students with high apprehension were students with low expectations for themselves in writing. They tended to see writing as "dangerous" and exposing to their flaws. The author included the MWA and its scoring key as appendixes and urged teachers of writing to administer the MWA as a way to further effectiveness in writing instruction. She suggested that inexperienced writers tend to be highly apprehensive because they rely on rules and struggle for control over such rules. She stated that by administering the MWA we can take the step to show students that we care about their feelings and are working to assist them in controlling their skills.

Selfe, C.L. "The Predrafting Processes of Four High- and Four Low-Apprehensive Writers. Research in the Teaching of English 18.1 (1984): 45-64.

This study characterized the prewriting processes of highly apprehensive writers in contrast to low apprehensive writers. Self found that high apprehensives lacked awareness of audience, purpose, and possible organizational strategies. He found that they did little "prefiguring" and did less planning during writing. The goal of high apprehensives was to get the first draft completed, revising little and editing even less. Thus the composing process for high apprehensives indicated little involvement and lack of enthusiasm for pursuing the writing process.

Bannister, L.A. "Writing Apprehension and Anti-writing: A Naturalistic Study of Composing Stretegies of College Freshman." Dissertation Abstracts International 43, 1982.

In this study Bannister found that highly apprehensive writers did little planning. In general they wrote down the first idea that came to mind and did little revision on their writing. She found that they feared "back-tracking" would cause them to lose their ideas. While low apprehensives elongated planning to create ideas (Bannister called this "anti-writing"), high apprehensives shortened planning to reduce the time their anxiety would be high. Her study indicated that highly apprehensive writers compressed writing time or postponed writing all together to avoid high anxiety. Thus this study confirmed that apprehensive writers lack strategies and confidence to write.

WHAT CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN REDUCING WRITING ANXIETY AND MOTIVATING RELUCTANT WRITERS?

Fox, R.F. "Treatment of writing apprehension and its effects on composition." Research in the Teaching of English 14 (1980): 39-49.

This study summarized the results of a semester-long project involving six sections of a college composition course. Fox used an experimental group to find the effects of peer-trained study groups on composition quality and writing apprehension. The results indicated that those students who experienced the experimental treatment had significantly reduced anxiety about writing. Fox reasoned that the elevated sense of trust of communication and evaluation caused this reduction in apprehension.

Daly, J.A. "Writing Apprehension." In When a Writer Can't Write. Ed. M. Rose. New York: Guildford, 1985, 43-82.

This study by Daly found that highly apprehensive writers do not understand the processes involved in writing. He labelled this misconception "comparison-deficiency", when writers compared their intentions to the written product and found the product deficient. This feeling of inadequacy was shown to punish the writer throughout the writing experience and added to their feeling of apprehension. This study showed the importance of structuring the assignment in order to minimize confusion and foster confidence in expectations.

Raisman, Neal. "Technical Writing Reduces Writing Anxiety." Technical Writing Teacher Journal 11.2 (Winter 1984): 145-56.

This article summarized a study of 150 freshman college students which was aimed at determining if assigning technical writing (letters, memos, directions, descriptions, and specifications) led to a reduction in writing anxiety. First, a survey was conducted to access the students' pre-instructional attitude toward writing to determine if writing instruction caused anxiety. The results indicated that 88% of the students experienced worry about their freshman writing course. A control group was used who experienced the traditional freshman course using literary essay or rhetorical teaching approaches. The study group consisted of 35 students who received technical writing assignments. The results of the course evaluation indicated that the students in the study group experienced less anxiety about their writing assignments than did their counterparts in the control group. These results indicate that technical writing lowers anxiety and suggests that the more structured assignment creates a more positive climate for writing instruction.

Walker, Barbara E. "Using a Language Experience Approach with Reluctant Writers in the Middle School." Literary: Issues and Practices 7 (1990): 69-71.

This article cited a study completed in the summer of 1989 involving 10 middle school students who used the Language Experience Approach during a five-week program at the University of Maryland Summer Reading Clinic. This program involved a total language approach--speaking, listening, reading, and writing--in bridging the gap from oral to written language, an important step in the acquisition of writing skills. Before beginning the program the students (all from different school in two counties in Maryland) discussed how writing was taught in their school: all had learned some writing strategies, five said they wrote in journals, two said they could choose their own topics and none of them liked to write. The students then engaged in a discussion of where they would rather be than in school. The clinician in charge recorded their responses on the chalkboard and gradually an "outline" of ideas was evident. Progressively as the days passed the students' ideas grew and they recognized the need to organize them and edit them. They then were asked for suggestions to organize these ideas into a story. A group story was then generated and every student was given a typed copy of it the next day. Editing as a group ensued with various individuals voicing their dissatisfaction with some of the group's decisions. These students were encouraged to then pursue their own versions. Soon all students were writing their own versions. Within a week they had completed this story and when given the opportunity to write another group story, three elected to write their own instead. By the end of the fifth week all ten were writing independently. The success of this study indicated that internalizing the cognitive processes of writing through whole language experiences can promote growth in the writing process.

Cole, Judy. "Writing: The Key to Success." JET, Communication: Journalism Education Today 23.1 (Fall 1989): 9-10.

Twenty-five high school students were involved in this experimental writing course at Billings High School in Billings, Montana. Designed as an alternative English class for accelerated students, the students were computer selected based on interest and previous success. The author of the article taught the course and was instrumental in recording the progress of the students. The project involved researching, assimilating and correlating data about the school's history over the past 50 years. The goal was to publish a history book of the school. Students were involved in interviewing community members, selectively searching school archives for appropriate material and ultimately writing the text for the published book. Cole noted that students' interest was very high, their enthusiasm spread to other classes where peers were encouraged and stimulated to get involved through direct contributions, and that "students were much more enthusiastic about journalistic writing than the usual assignments." She cited that the" end result rather than the process kept the students interested."

Kasadow, Nancy and Pat McClurg. "Will the Integration of Media Projects into an Existing Language Arts Curriculum Affect Year-End Achievement? A Research Study." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association, 4-6 October 1984, Jackson Hole, Wyoming (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED257416).

This study used the Metropolitan Achievement Test (1978 ed.) to measure the year-end achievement of 5th and 6th grade students. An experimental group and a control group was used in investigating the effect of integrating a media project into an existing language arts curriculum. The experimental group showed a significant increase in both reading and language arts achievement test scores, thereby implicating that the use of media projects (production of slide tapes, videos, filmstrips accompanied by students' written scripts) increased student interest and motivation and reluctant learners became involved in language activities.

Meem, Deborah T. The Effect of Classroom Computer Use on College Basic Writers: A Controlled Study in Progress. University of Cincinatti, 1989. EDRS, record number ED305980.

This article summarized a study at the University College of the University of Cincinnati involving developmental English students. It was designed to test the effect of composing and revising at a computer. The students were divided into three groups: a control group who did not use computers at all; a group who had access to Apple IIe computers equipped with Bank Street Writer II word processing software; and a computer group using Bank Street and Writer's Helper, software which is designed to guide the writer through the entire writing process. After 7 of the 11 quarters of the study had been completed, 698 students were enrolled in the course, 27.4% had no prior computer experience. 233 students were assigned to non-computer control sections, 233 to computer classes using Bank Street Writer only, and 232 to sections utilizing the Writer's Helper as a computerized teaching supplement. Common standards were desired in scoring papers, since 6 instructors were used in the study, so "anchor" students were selected in each group. These "anchor papers" were graded by the entire teaching team. Short term results indicated that computers actually seemed to hurt student progress. Longitudinal study indicated that students enjoyed using the computers and felt good about their work, but their writing was not measurably improved over the control group. Attitude was affected more than skill.

Outhred, Lynn. "To Write or Not to Write: Does Using a Word Processor Assist Reluctant Writers?" Australia and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities 13.4 (1987): 211-217.

This article focussed on an exploratory study set up to investigate the effects of using a word processor on the written work of a small sample of children with learning difficulties. 15 children (13 boys and 2 girls) participated ranging in age from 8.6 to 12.0 years. These children were enrolled in a special class because of they were performing poorly in one or more of the basic skill areas, mathematics, reading, writing or spelling. The children were not separated into a control and experimental group owing to the small number of children involved; hence the study was seen as a pilot one, investigating factors that might be more carefully controlled in a subsequent project. The study ran from 11 to 29 weeks with maximum enrollment at 10 students. The children wrote two stories each week, one word-processed and one handwritten. Handwritten sessions were not timed, while each child had only one-half hour per week at the computer. Factors which influenced the results were considered: 1) Children could not type. 2) Children who felt they wrote well, wrote more. 3) Story topic and mood of the child affected enthusiasm. The results from this preliminary study were encouraging. The children seemed enthusiastic about their writing, exhibited fewer spelling/language usage errors, and asked to write more frequently.

Word, Miriam F. "A Personalized Developmental Model for the Teaching of Communications I. A Practicum Report." Nova University, 1990. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED316271.

This report summarized the findings of a project that was undertaken to improve the student success rate in a writing course at a Florida multi-campus institution. 489 students had taken the course and 18% were unsuccessful in completing it in one semester. It was noted that there were three observable student behaviors which contributed to this failure: inability to stay on task, frustration caused by the inability to communicate thoughts, and a lack of competent writing techniques. A group of 17 students was targeted in the fall semester of 1989 and an instructional approach entitled "Type-Writing" was used. This method of instruction was designed to account for each student's preferred learning style, as identified by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The target group was tested using a pre-writing assignment to determine writing skill level, a pre-writing awareness survey and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Students were then identified as "S" learners (linear learners), "N" learners (global learners) or both. A variety of tasks were assigned during the semester which were aimed at recognizing the characteristics of the linear and global learners. Students were retested at the end of the 12-week semester and results were compared. They included: 1) all 17 of the students improved in all writing skill areas; 2) students grew in awareness of their writing skill approaches; 3) all students passed with a grade of C or better; 4) 10 of the students showed improvement in the writing awareness survey. The author noted that an elevated awareness of learning styles enhanced instruction for all students, thereby reinforcing the idea that quality instruction in all modalities remains instrumental to effective teaching.

Hayes, Mary F., et. al. Teachers and Writers: Articles from the Ohio Writing Project. Oxford, Ohio: Miami University, 1981.

In an article entitled "The Reluctant Wr:ter: A Search for a Cure" fifth grade Language Arts teacher Barbara L. Duff set out to discover why so many students refuse to write. She defined three types of reluctant writers: the student who will not write; the student who mentally composes but does not physically put writing on paper; the student who physically places words on paper but does not mentally engage in the act of writing. Then she identified effective teaching strategies which she has found useful in dealing with each of these reluctant writers: 1) Provide positive reinforcement for any attempt at writing. Reward the process not the product. 2) Provide students with the freedom to incorporate their ideas into the writing assignments. 3) Allow for peer tutoring and evaluation. Group work also encourages students to read their material aloud. 4) Use physical props to stimulate creativity. She noted that many reluctant writers lack experience and need to act out their writing before it can become concrete on paper.

Reece, Shelley. "The Journal Keeps the Person in the Process." Speech presented at the annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Washington, D.C., March 1980. ERIC number ED193655.

In this speech Reece defended journal writing as a practice that provides students with many benefits. She cited personal growth, reduction of writing apprehension, strengthening of students' prewriting skills, and enhanced development of writing abilities as benefits of journal writing. She stated that journals should be viewed as places for students to write what they will, for teachers to accept as valuable what students say because they say it, and for teachers to refrain from evaluating what students write. Although Reece admitted that journals may cause teachers to hesitate because they may believe that there is too much variety in the amount, kinds and quality of writing done in journals; that journals may be filled with "garbage" and far too much intimacy and prove difficult to evaluate, she argued that her experience as a writing teacher has found journal writing to be helpful in assisting students discover the well of information formed by their personal experience, as well as provide a bank of personal and local language that may nourish their writing in other kinds of prose.

Maguire, Frank. "Eleven Strategies for Building Self-Confidence in Student Writers." Clearing House 62.6 (February 1989): 256-58.

This article cited 11 strategies that writing teachers could use to alleviate writing apprehension and to encourage student writers to feel confident about revealing thoughts in writing. These strategies included: journals; structured assignments (include topic, grading criteria, help sessions); class discussions of assignments; responding to content not errors in mechanics; being positive; reading aloud examples of good student work; displaying examples of student's work; sharing personal writing; use of peer-tutoring; teaching proofreading as a skill; publishing students' works for the class.

Donlan, Dan. "When Teacher-Researchers Compare Notes on Writing Apprehension." English-Journal 75.5 (September 1986): 87-89.

This article cited concerns which teachers of writing should note. It pointed out that writers who are apprehensive avoid writing, use less intense language, write longer, unclear sentences, resist revision, and lack self-confidence. The author stated that these factors cause such students to pose significant, instructional problems. To counter these conditions he suggested that teachers of writing should: 1) Recognize personal attitudes about writing as reflected in their classroom physical/emotional environment. 2) Teach writing as an on-going process, not a series of evaluated products. 3) Focus on student's knowledge of the world. 4) Stress positive rather than negative aspects of evaluative comments.

Boice, Robert. "Cognitive Components of Blocking." Written-Communication Journal 2.1 (January 1985): 91-104.

This study involved more than 5,000 examples of "self-talk" gathered from writing students during the initiation and completion of writing sessions. Analysis revealed that there are seven cognitive components of blocking: work apprehension, procrastination, dysphoria, impatience, perfectionism, evaluation anxiety, and rules. The study categorized students according to their self-talk into two groups--blockers (those who experienced anxiety and negativism) and nonblockers (those who worked through the writing process and attacked it positively). Results indicated that blockers are more likely than nonblockers to list negative thoughts and less likely to evidence positive thoughts during writing.

Bruner, Mark. "Brief: Using Knuckles to Help Solve Writer's Block." Language-Arts Journal 64.4 (April 1987): 444-46.

This article cited methods found effective in the classroom in dealing with "writer's block". He found that using "stream of consciousness" writing yields bits and pieces of information which later may be moved into larger, more meaningful pieces of work. He also attempted "dream writing" with high school students wherein they recorded their dreams in notebooks and used them as source books for later stories.

Aylesworth, John. "Good Hunting: A Look at the Writing of Learning Disabled Children." FOCUS: Teaching English Language Arts 12.2 (Winter 1986):52-53.

This article cited the findings of 7 years of field study in teaching reading to learning disabled elementary students. Eighty-five percent of his students were boys. In attempting to teach them to read he discovered that they were unable to cope with the basal readers and had few successful experiences with written material. He noted that reading would not be learned unless approached from a new perspective. He chose writing as the tool. One technique he found successful with his students was periods of free writing. After several weeks of this he would then suggest topics, allowing students to select their choice. He found that there evolved two types of writers. He identified one as the "cautious type" who presents very stiff, stilted writing. The other he called the "runner"; this child has so much to say and so much energy that he doesn't know how to stop or even slow down. Other writing techniques he used in working with learning disabled students included journals and letter writing. The results of his field work indicated that through writing students' reading ability is increased and growth is evident.

Vacha, Elaine. "Tutoring the Reluctant Learner." FOCUS: Teaching English Language Arts 12.2 (Winter 1986): 70-1.

This article summarized the observations of a high school teacher who spent four years tutoring students with learning disabilities, developmental handicaps and behavioral problems. She defined reluctant learners as students "who appear unmotivated to learn what the educational community deems important for a high school diploma...(who) generally do not complete assignments, waste class time rather than attend to the task at hand, and generally appear totally 'turned off' by school and learning." She cited techniques found to be helpful in motivating these reluctant learners: 1) Set up a highly structured environment, including goals and consequences. 2) Provide immediate feedback on progress or lack of it. She cited praise as a positive motivator. 3) Gear tasks to their ability, permit progress at an appropriate rate and set reasonable expectations. 4) Provide much individual attention and eye contact. 5) Reinforce the fact that you value them as individuals and respect them.

DiGiammarini, Frank. "Text Editing." Classroom Computer News 2.2 (November/December 1982): 32-33.

This article reported on one fifth grade teacher who saw more advantages than disadvantages in using word processing for writing instruction and who has been using a text editor in her classroom for two years. Using a Commodore 8K PET microcomputer, a printer, and a text editing program, Laurie Fales established a computer corner in her classroom. Each student received formal instruction and practice time in using the software following the directions which were printed on a large, laminated oak-tag sign hung eye-level with the computer. Students who learned quickly became peer tutors. Fales provided no formal keyboarding instruction, but students learned to enter lines of text and machine edit their own work quickly. Since PET used a cassette storage system, each student had his or her own cassette. Each student worked on their own assignments at established times and provided Fales with a clean, printed copy for her review. Fales reported that her students revised their work more, wrote longer stories, followed directions better, and paid attention to detail.

Schwartz, Mimi. "Computers and the Teaching of Writing." Educational Technology 22 (November 1982): 27-29.

This article summarized the effects of computers in assisting student writing. Schwartz noted that students with writer's block find that the screen terminal, thanks to its erasing capability--often stimulate a flow of words that paper inhibits. She also pointed out that having a printer available encourages constant revision because students can print out their work, insert revisions, type the changes in and then print a clean copy. She added that revisions made on the computer also seem to lessen defensiveness and encourage students to listen to teacher's suggestions. She noted that one child "who hated writing because of his poor spelling and chicken-scratch handwriting" began to enjoy his work at the computer terminal. Schwartz also pointed out the disadvantages of using computers to teach writing: cost, limitations of software, students' fears of technology, the inability to physically handle words on the screen.

SUMMARY

The research involving composition skills and writing apprehension indicated a direct relationship between student attitudes and the quality of composition. Steidle cited a direct linear dependency between student attitudes and composition quality. He conducted a study involving 920 students from grades four, five, nine and twelve. The results showed that students who had positive self-concepts and had experienced success in school also had positive attitudes toward writing. Powell's study also demonstrated a direct relationship between success in school and writing apprehension. She found that most A and B undergraduate students had low apprehension, while most D and F students had high apprehension (116-17). Virginia Book confirmed in her study that students with high apprehension (as measured on the Daly-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension) wrote less and made three times more spelling errors than low apprehensives. Her results linked underdeveloped skills, avoidance of writing, and a general lack of experience with high apprehension. Beatty and Payne confirmed that students who admitted fearing writing situations also scored higher in apprehension and wrote briefer essays (608-9). Self found that highly apprehensive writers did little written "pre-figuring," moved directly to drafting, and did less planning

during writing. This study cited that students with high apprehension spent little time on individual sentences, pushing ahead to complete the first draft, and did sparse revising and editing (Self 50-53).

Daly reports that high apprehensives hold specific beliefs about writing and learning to write which block, rather than facilitate, effective production (46). According to Daly apprehensive writers attribute any successful experiences to luck and blame failure on their lack of ability (57-58). Daly describes these writers as being less aware of written words and inexperienced at "playing with or appreciating the artistry" of written language (42). He found that high apprehensives have a consistent feeling of deficient production which punishes the writer during the act of writing. Daly called this "comparison-deficiency" explanation for writing apprehension. Apprehension begins and is maintained when writers compare their intentions to the written product and find the product deficient (42-46).

In addition it was found that students' attitudes and experiences are also affected by their personality traits. A survey by Hollandsworth documented that students labeled "extraversion" were not apprehensive toward writing, while those labeled "introversion" had no difficulty writing as long as the activity was teacher directed. These findings, combined with the implications of the other studies, brought to light another concern. The interplay of teacher behaviors

and student activities must be scrutinized in order to determine how instruction might best foster success in writing and work to reduce or alleviate writing apprehension.

Buley-Meissner cited the results of a study that strove to connect instruction and lowered anxiety in students. An analysis of her results indicated five major conclusions that are pertinent to instruction. She cited that students are most apprehensive when they felt threatened by evaluation. Her findings indicated that apprehensive students lacked the basic strategies necessary to produce good writing. She cited that apprehensive students had low expectations for success and viewed writing activities as "dangerous" (16-17). One positive result that Buley-Meissner pointed out was that even apprehensive students liked writing as a means of self-expression (18).

There are many studies that cite activities which have proven to be successful in reducing apprehension and motivating reluctant learners. Raisman found that students experienced less anxiety when involved with technical writing assignments. When he surveyed 150 freshman college students he cited that 88% experienced worry about their freshman writing class. A control group of 35 students was given non-traditional instruction involving well-defined, structured technical writing assignments. The students in this group expressed less worry about their writing course than did their traditionally instructed counterparts. Raisman

concluded that the highly structured assignments led to reduced apprehension and created a more positive climate for writing (155-56). Using peer interaction as a major source of feedback to writers proved to reduce the writing apprehension in a study by Fox. In a semester long study he succeeded in significantly lowering the apprehension of writers, especially those in his experimental group where he used trained, peer-writing workshop groups to assist students while writing. Fox reasoned that trust of communication and trust of evaluation were the significant factors that led to success (39-43).

In a study by Barbara Walker a total language approach was used. Her findings indicated that by bridging the gap from oral to written language, students internalized the process of writing and growth was promoted (69-71). Judy Cole found this total language approach to be beneficial for high school students involved in an experimental writing course. Cole noted that the students' interest was very high and their enthusiasm spread to other classes. She cited that the "end result (a published history book of the school) rather than the process kept the students interested" (9-10). Nancy Kadadow and Pat McClurg investigated the effect of utilizing a media project in teaching writing. They cited significant increased achievement in language arts as measured on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. In addition they concluded that students were more interested in the

written scripts and even reluctant learners became involved in language activities.

Use of word processors has also entered into the variables affecting writing achievement. Deborah Meem's study focused on the effect of composing and revising on a computer. Her study involved 698 college level, developmental English students. Short term findings indicated that computers seemed to affect attitude more than skill. Writing achievement did not significantly increase in the experimental group, but they indicated in the final survey that they enjoyed using the computers and felt good about their writing. Lynn Outhred conducted another exploratory study involving 15 children who used word processors during a five week summer school program. Although her results were inconclusive (she indicated that further study should be done) Outhred cited that the children seemed enthusiastic about their writing, exhibited fewer errors and asked to write more frequently when computers were involved (215-17).

With the advent of Mastery Teaching (the Hunter Model) educators have been encouraged to elevate their awareness of learning styles and teach to all modalities within each unit of study. Miriam Word confirms this need to enhance instruction to include all learners in her study of 489 college students enrolled in a writing course. Since 18% of those students were unsuccessful, she investigated and noted

that inability to stay on task, frustration, and a lack of competent writing techniques contributed to their poor performance. After providing instruction aimed at both global and linear learners, the target group passed the course and showed significant improvement in their writing awareness survey. Several studies supported this need for increased total language involvement (Haynes, et.al.; Reece; MacGuire; Dolan; Walker) and cited that educators must be willing to find value in each student in order to foster an environment conducive to growth in writing skills.

CONCLUSION

Writing apprehension can be measured and has been found to affect the quality of composition. Studies have proven that students who are apprehensive generally have negative attitudes toward tasks that involve writing and spend little time engaged in the writing process. Success and positive self-concepts have been found to be associated with low apprehension, confirming that for students to grow as writers they must not be highly apprehensive about writing. Research indicated that when students were involved in total language experiences wherein several learning styles were utilized their writing skills increased and apprehension decreased.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Writing instructors evaluate their own apprehensions involving writing in order to enhance their understanding of students' apprehensions.
2. Writing instructors work to create a climate that fosters a reduction of anxiety for students, structure assignments that build in success for all learners, whether global or linear, and view writing as a risk-taking process that requires non-threatening practice to achieve growth.
3. Writing instructors administer the Daly-Miller Measure of Writing Apprehension (or a similar survey instrument) in order to gain insight into students' strengths and weaknesses prior to instruction.
4. Writing instructors demonstrate their belief that each student's writing is valuable and structure comments that are positive to reflect this belief.
5. Researchers focus future studies on delivery of writing instruction and teacher behaviors that foster writing achievement and reduce apprehension.

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